

Adult Literacy Contact Centre NEWSLETTER



September 1994

Volume 8, Number 1

A project of the Adult Basic Education Association of B.C.

B. C. Learner Winner of Canada Post Award

Ellen Szita of Victoria is one of six national winners of the Canada Post Corporation's second annual "Flight For Freedom Awards" for outstanding contributions to literacy.

Szita was named English language recipient of the Individual Achievement Award. The French language recipient is Real Jacques of Quebec.

The Flight For Freedom Awards program "recognizes the contributions of business, organizations, teachers and individuals to the cause of literacy in Canada."

This year's award recipients attended a reception hosted by Governor General Ramon Hnatyshyn at Rideau Hall in Ottawa on International Literacy Day, September 8, 1994. Specially commissioned trophies were presented to the winners.

The Individual Achievement Award, one of four award categories, recognizes the achievement of an individual "who has succeeded in overcoming social or economic barriers imposed by insufficient literacy skills."

Szita was selected "for turning her life around through literacy, and for inspiring two of her children to follow in her footsteps."

The British-born Szita dropped out of school at age 14 (with approximately a Grade 5 reading level ability), and achieved a Grade 12 education at the age of 50. She currently lives and works in Victoria where she is a member of the Executive of the Board of Directors for Project Literacy Victoria.

Szita's lifelong struggle with low literacy skills - and her eventual triumph - were chronicled in the documentary film *Ellen's Story* by Robert Duncan Productions, Inc. of Vancouver. (Note: the video *Ellen's Story* is available on loan from the ALCC. Phone: 1-800-663-1293)

In her submission to Canada Post, Szita wrote: "Representing learners wherever I'm needed is the single most important thing in my life today and I will never stop trying to help eradicate illiteracy."

The other award categories and winners are:

Governor General's Flight for Freedom Award

Winner: Laubach Literacy of Canada, in recognition of "its 25-year volunteer commitment to raising the literacy level of Canadian society [and] its dedication in assisting Canadians to reach their full literate potential."

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Corporate Canada Literacy Award

Winner: Syncrude Canada Ltd., Fort McMurray, Alberta "for encouraging and supporting an employee-directed workplace literacy program that has resulted in enhanced employee confidence and competence."

Literacy Education Award

English language winner: Robin Silverman, Toronto "for her unique perspective into the obstacles that confront literacy learners daily, and for her dedication to encouraging street youth to improve their reading and writing skills to dramatically change their lives."

French language winner: Nicole Lessard, Longueuil, Quebec, "for her creation of specialized literacy materials that have resulted in increased self-confidence, knowledge and personal belief among her learners." □

Symposium on Workplace Literacy: From Ideas to Action

A "how-to" symposium on workplace literacy will take place on Friday, October 14 in Vancouver.

The one day symposium, called "Putting Real Life Literacy Programs to Work," is presented by the Business

Council of B.C. and the National Literacy Secretariat. It is designed to show participants how to take literacy programs from the idea stage to actual implementation in the workplace.

Topics to be covered include:

- ❖ identifying literacy problems in the workplace
- ❖ bringing together the employer, organized labour, and the community
- ❖ resourcing contractors, consultants and training organizations
- ❖ selecting participants for the programs
- ❖ choosing the right training materials
- ❖ networking with companies already making progress in literacy training

The symposium is intended for employers, human resource practitioners, union representatives, employment counsellors, training and development managers, social workers, private and public sector educators, members of the legal profession, and organization re-engineering consultants.

The symposium will include small and large group participation throughout the day. Participants will learn how to utilize a storyboard system during the planning

stages of a training program. A sample storyboard action system with many "how-to's" on implementing a literacy program will be presented. Each participant will be given his or her own template for later use in the workplace.

Participants will also be given the opportunity to meet with a number of literacy resource exhibitors.

The fee to attend this event is \$95.00 per person, including taxes, lunch and refreshments.

To register, contact:

Business Council of B.C.
Suite 810
1050 West Pender Street
Vancouver, B.C.
V6E 3S7
Phone: (604) 684-3384
Fax: (604) 684-7957 □

Message from the Contact Centre

We regret to announce the departure from our staff of Nancy Richardson, Newsletter Reporter, as of this August. Nancy had been with the Contact Centre since 1989. She brought dedication and enthusiasm to her work on the newsletter and was deeply committed to serving our public. We will miss her greatly and wish her every success in her future endeavours.

Because of this reduction of our staffing for the year, we will not be producing the newsletter monthly. The next newsletter will be distributed in November, 1994.

Two positions open at MSTL

The Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour (MSTL) has announced two two-year secondment or contract opportunities for the positions of Coordinator, Adult Literacy Programs and Adult Basic Education Coordinator.

These two positions will replace the current single position of Coordinator, Adult Literacy Programs. The current Coordinator, Mary Waddington, is returning to Vancouver Community College as a Basic Education instructor after taking a year's sabbatical.

Coordinator, Adult Literacy Programs

The role of the Coordinator is to coordinate the overall direction, development, delivery and evaluation of adult literacy programs and resources in B.C.

The responsibilities of the Coordinator will be to:

- ❖ review institutional program proposals
- ❖ address curriculum development needs
- ❖ address the development of literacy practitioners
- ❖ liaise with external agencies, the literacy field, and community and industry representatives
- ❖ provide provincial leadership in the Decade of Literacy (the 1990's)

- ❖ make recommendations for budget allocations
- ❖ oversee a provincial literacy tuition-free policy
- ❖ provide ongoing needs analysis in literacy programs
- ❖ assist with policy development

Part of the role is to manage the funding of the \$1.3 million literacy projects cost-shared between the MSTL and the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS), Human Resources and Development Canada. The incumbent will:

- ❖ solicit project proposals
- ❖ manage an internal and external review process
- ❖ liaise with the field and negotiate with the NLS
- ❖ administer the funding and monitoring of approved projects

The qualifications for the position include: a post-secondary degree in an appropriate discipline with considerable experience in a related field; knowledge of the theory and practice of adult education; knowledge of instructional and curriculum design and development; excellent communication skills; and analytical and evaluation skills.

The start date for this position is negotiable and could be as early

as November 1, 1994. Applications and resumes should be submitted by **4:30 p.m., Friday, October 7, 1994.**

ABE Coordinator

The role of the ABE Coordinator is to coordinate the development, delivery and evaluation of the ABE program on behalf of the Ministry. Responsibilities will include:

- ❖ advise on budget allocations
- ❖ develop policy and strategic directions
- ❖ oversee curriculum and material development
- ❖ liaise with the field and other Ministry and government personnel
- ❖ serve on appropriate committees
- ❖ provide current information on ABE programs

The ABE Coordinator will work with a team of Ministry personnel in providing leadership to the public education system on matters relevant to ABE. The incumbent will:

- ❖ coordinate MSTL's Applied Academics Initiative
- ❖ work closely with the Ministry of Education on policy and program issues which affect the delivery of ABE through the institutions of both Ministries

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❖ liaise with Skills Now initiatives that have an ABE component

The qualifications for this position include: a post-secondary degree in an appropriate discipline plus considerable experience in a related field; in-depth knowledge of the field of ABE; knowledge of the theory and practice of adult education; knowledge of instructional and curriculum design and development; excellent communication skills; analytical and evaluation skills.

The start date for this position is January 3, 1995. Applications and resumes should be submitted by **4:30 p.m., Wednesday, October 26, 1994.**

For both positions, apply to:

Norma Kidd, Manager
Developmental Programs
Urban Colleges, Developmental and
Business Programs
Ministry of Skills, Training and
Labour
2nd Floor, 838 Fort Street
Victoria, B.C.
V8V 1X4
Phone: (604) 387-6182
Fax: (604) 356-8851 □

Skills Now Update

Post-secondary institutions in B.C. will deliver community service and workplace training programs in all regions of the province beginning this September, under a new program announced on August 15, 1994 by the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour (MSTL).

The Community Outreach Partnerships program will provide \$2 million this year for part-time retraining and continuing education opportunities to youth, workers and the unemployed.

The institutions will deliver the programs in cooperation with business, labour, multicultural, social service and volunteer groups. The partnerships program is expected to provide part-time courses to 7,500 British Columbians over two years. Both credit and non-credit courses will be offered. In its first year, the program will target those "most in need, including people without basic education or job skills."

To deliver the programs, all B.C. post-secondary institutions have applied for Skills Now grants of up to \$70,000.

The Community Outreach Partnerships program is part of the government's Skills Now initiative that was announced in May this year by Premier Mike Harcourt and (MSTL) Minister

Dan Miller. Skills Now will invest \$200 million over two years in a new skills training plan for high school and post-secondary students, youth and the unemployed.

For information on Skills Now, phone: 1-800-63-SKILL □

New Coordinator, ELT

The Ministry of Skills Training and Labour (MSTL) has announced a new appointment. Donna Woo became Coordinator, English Language Training Programs (ELT), Post Secondary Education Branch, effective July 12, 1994.

Woo replaces Reena Baker, who had been in the position since March 1, 1993.

Woo has been with the Ministry since 1989. She was previously a policy and legislation analyst, Policy and Planning Division, and a research analyst, Developmental Programs, Post Secondary Education Division.

As Coordinator, Woo will be active in the development of an ELT policy for the province. Her duties will include successful implementation of the Combined Skills Initiative, a component of Skills Now. Woo will also act as liaison between the Ministry and the field on English language training issues as well as coordinate ELT projects for the Ministry. □

ABE Outcomes study goes province-wide

A study designed to assess the effects of ABE from the student's perspective will collect comprehensive and detailed data from ABE students in B.C. community colleges this year.

The ABE Outcomes Study was initiated in 1991 from an expressed need within the ABE field for information which can lead to improvements in the ability of ABE programs to meet student needs. After a three year process of development, including a pilot project at three community colleges during 1993/94, the study is now being implemented province-wide.

The purpose of the study is "to provide clear, consistent, reliable information about the educational, social and economic outcomes for students in college ABE programs." The study will also: identify strengths and weaknesses of ABE programs as perceived by students; and initiate ongoing procedures for collecting outcome information about ABE students.

The study is managed by a 27-member Steering Committee consisting of 24 ABE faculty and administrators from B.C. colleges, with the assistance of three personnel from the Ministry of Skills, Training

and Labour (MSTL) and the Advanced Education Council of B.C., which is administering the funds for the project.

Ted James, Director, Student Services and Developmental Education, Douglas College, is Chair of the Steering Committee.

Funding for the study is from a variety of sources including MSTL, the Council of Admissions and Transfers, and in-kind funding from the institutions involved.

Students are asked to voluntarily become part of the study when they register for the first time in a college ABE program at the beginning of this academic year. The longitudinal study will use telephone interviews and written formats to monitor the progress of students while they are enrolled in an ABE program and after they have moved on to other activities. Data collection will occur three times - upon entry, after five months, and after thirteen months. In addition, students who prematurely leave the program prior to November 1994, and between November 1994 and February 1995, will be surveyed separately.

The study will collect information about:

- ❖ students' initial reasons for enrolling and the degree to which they achieved their goals

- ❖ patterns, if any, of changes in goals and expectations as a result of the ABE experience

- ❖ students' perceptions of the institution's contribution to their success

- ❖ students' perceptions of the appropriateness of the ABE program, for example, its content, delivery and organization

- ❖ students' perceptions of the contributions of the ABE program to their success in the workplace and in further education

Final data collection for the pilot project phase of the study will occur in October 1994 at the three participating institutions: Capilano, Selkirk, and Okanagan University College. A detailed report on the pilot project will be available in January 1995.

Information about the study can be obtained from:

Ted James, Chair
ABE Outcomes Steering Committee
c/o Douglas College
P.O. Box 2503
New Westminster, B.C.
V3L 5B2
Phone: (604) 527-5321
Fax: (604) 527-5095 □

Our Own Words, Summer 1994

*I'll make a special meal
To quench the hunger to learn.
Create magic, speak and write
well,
If there exists such a deal.*

*I'll marinate the words in my
notes,
mix and fry sentences in
paragraphs.
Then ask the chef, my teacher,
for advice
To approve the dish and my new
device.*

This poem, entitled *The Magical Meal*, by Nata Dadmand of Capilano College, is included in the sixth edition of *Our Own Words*.

Our Own Words is the annual collection of writings by adult basic education students in B.C. community colleges and the Open Learning Agency. It is published by the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour and the Centre for Curriculum and Professional Development.

The 1994 *Our Own Words* contains stories, poems and essays by 62 contributors, writing at intermediate, advanced and provincial levels of the ABE curriculum.

Copies of the 52-page publication are available free of charge from the Adult Literacy Contact Centre. Phone toll-free 1-800-663-1293. □

Words of Change at Alberta Literacy Conference

Registration packages are now available for "Words of Change," the Alberta Association for Adult Literacy annual conference to be held November 17 - 19, 1994 at the Alberta Vocational College, Lesser Slave Lake.

The conference is open to any group or individual active in the literacy field.

Major strands at the conference are: front line strategies; background research; developing literacy in a new language; and literacy as an agent of change.

Some of the topics scheduled for the conference are:

- * poverty and empowerment
- * innovative approaches
- * workforce/workplace issues
- * literacy and the family
- * program development.

Confirmed keynote speakers are: Alberta author Aritha van Herk, (*Judith, The Tent Peg*); Alberta travel and rural issues writer Betty Kilgour; and local educator Helen Ord.

The early registration deadline for the conference is October 15, 1994.

For a registration brochure, contact:

Susan Armstrong
Words of Change Conference
1201 Main Street East
Lesser Slave Lake, Alberta
T0G 2A3
Phone: (403) 849-8626
Fax: (403) 849-2570
e-mail: Armstrong@GRDA.VCC.CALGARY.ABCA
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The Adult Literacy Contact Centre is a project of the Adult Basic Education Association of B.C. and is jointly funded by the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour; and the National Literacy Secretariat.

The Centre welcomes receiving your literacy news by phone, fax or mail. We reserve the right to edit written submissions for the newsletter.

The newsletter is published monthly (except as noted). It is available free of charge to any individual or agency upon request.

